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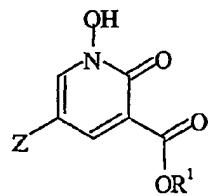
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(54) Title: PYRIDINE N-OXIDES AS ANTIVIRAL AGENTS

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(I)

(57) Abstract: The present invention relates to pyridinone derivatives of formula (I) wherein Z represents C₂₋₆ alkynyl, aryl or heteroaryl, any of which groups may be optionally substituted, and R¹ represents hydrogen, C₁₋₆alkyl, C₃₋₇ heterocycloalkyl(C₁₋₆)alkyl, di(C₁₋₆)alkylamino(C₁₋₆)alkyl, C₂₋₆ alkylcarbonyloxy(C₁₋₆)alkyl or C₃₋₇ cycloalkoxycarbonyloxy(C₁₋₆)alkyl, and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof, useful in the prevention and treatment of hepatitis C virus infections.